



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Tuesday, 17th October, 2017 at 7.00 pm
at the Council Offices, Farnborough

Councillor D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council
Councillor K.H. Muschamp, Deputy Leader and Business, Safety and Regulation
Portfolio Holder

Councillor Barbara Hurst, Health and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor G.B. Lyon, Concessions and Community Support Portfolio Holder
Councillor M.L. Sheehan, Leisure and Youth Portfolio Holder
Councillor P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder
Councillor M.J. Tennant, Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder

The Cabinet considered the following matters at the above-mentioned meeting. All executive decisions of the Cabinet shall become effective, subject to the call-in procedure, from **31st October, 2017**.

35. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th September, 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

36. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18 - 2020/21 –**
(Councillor Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN1731, which set out the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and sought endorsement of an updated Strategy for the period 2017/18 to 2020/21. The Report also set out the Medium Term Financial forecast, which had been produced for indicative planning purposes. It was confirmed that final decisions on the overall budget and Council Tax level would be made by the Council in February 2018.

The Cabinet was advised that the Strategy had been reviewed and updated but had remained largely unchanged from the Strategy approved by the Council in October 2016. The Report set out all the risks, assumptions and initiatives that had been

considered in formulating the new Strategy. Members were informed that the existing Strategy had served the Council well in supporting financial planning over the medium term. It had been integral to the Corporate Plan and had supported the 8-Point Plan for the achievement of sustainability.

The Cabinet was informed that, to ensure that a revised Strategy would be relevant to current decision making, it was necessary to consider this in the context of the Medium Term Financial Forecast. The Revenue Forecast showed a projected budget gap of £2.2 million by 2020/21.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Council's level of reserves was considered to be adequate at the current time, although it was anticipated that this level was likely to increase later in the financial year.

The Cabinet

- (i) **RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, as set out in Appendix A of Report No. FIN1731, be approved; and
- (ii) **RESOLVED** that the Medium Term Financial Forecast and the principal issues and risks associated with it, as set out in the Report, be noted.

37. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS - CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS – (Councillor Gareth Lyon, Concessions and Community Support Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN1730, which set out a proposal to undertake a public consultation in respect of the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme in order to inform any decision to review or amend the Scheme for the 2018/19 financial year. It was also being proposed to carry out a public consultation exercise on potential changes to certain, locally set, Council Tax discounts and exemptions.

Members were reminded that local authorities had been developing their own Council Tax Support Schemes since April 2013. It was confirmed that the current scheme required a minimum contribution by Council Tax payers of 10%, with a savings threshold of £6,000. It was reported that 10% was at the lower end of similar councils' schemes and, for this reason, the majority of the Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group had supported including a range of potential increases to the contribution payable to 12%, 15%, 18%, 20% and 25% in the consultation. In supporting the proposals, Members stressed the importance of encouraging the swift return to use of vacant properties.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the undertaking of public consultation on the harmonisation elements of the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme, as set out in Report No. FIN1730, be approved;
- (ii) the inclusion in the consultation of a range of potential increases to the contribution payable to 12%, 15%, 18%, 20% and 25% be approved;

- (iii) the Head of Financial Services, in consultation with the Concessions and Community Support Portfolio Holder, be authorised to agree the details of the consultation paper, following discussion with the Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group;
- (iv) the undertaking of a public consultation exercise on options around the level of Council Tax discounts and exemptions, as set out in the Report, be approved;
- (v) the Head of Financial Services, in consultation with the Concessions and Community Support Portfolio Holder, be authorised to agree the details of the consultation paper in respect of Council Tax discounts and exemptions.

38. **SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE –**

(Councillor Ken Muschamp, Business, Safety and Regulation Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. EHH1731, which set out the Council's proposed new Policy and Procedure for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Members heard that the proposed Policy complied with the most recent Government guidance in relation to safeguarding matters, Working Together to Safeguard Children and set out the Council's commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

The Cabinet was supportive of the proposed new Policy and discussed areas including how culture could affect safeguarding procedures, the use of the term 'Honour Based Violence' and usage of the Safety Net website. It was agreed that any reference to 'Honour Based Violence' would be either re-worded or an explanation added that no incidences of violence should be considered to carry any 'honour'.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the adoption of the Policy and Procedure for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report No. EHH1731 and amended at the meeting, be approved.

39. **FUNDED SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE FOR AIR QUALITY FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE A331 –**

(Councillor Martin Tennant, Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. EHH1729, which set out a request for an income and expenditure supplementary estimate of £50,000 in 2017/18 to undertake a 'Proposal for a Feasibility Study' into measures to improve air quality along the A331.

Members were informed that the feasibility study was required by DEFRA, who would be fully grant funding the whole project. It was confirmed that, on approval of the proposal, further funding would be allocated to undertake the feasibility study itself.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the additional duties placed on the Council and the deadlines for completion of the key milestones, as set out in Report No. EHH1729, be noted;
- (ii) an income and expenditure supplementary estimate of £50,000 in 2017/18 be approved;
- (iii) noting that further work may also be granted funded by DEFRA, future income and expenditure through the budget monitoring process be approved, with the expectation that expenditure would be kept in line with income; and
- (iv) the approach being taken to this work, as set out on the Report, be approved, noting that the final Plan would require approval by the Cabinet.

40. **PLANNING FOR THE RIGHT HOMES IN THE RIGHT PLACES: CONSULTATION PROPOSALS –**
(Councillor Martin Tennant, Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. PLN1733, which sought agreement to submit comments in response to the Government's 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places' consultation.

The Report explained that the consultation had been created as a result of the Government's Housing White Paper earlier in 2017. Proposals in the consultation included setting out a proposed standard methodology for calculating local authorities' housing need. The new methodology would result in Rushmoor's net new homes required per annum dropping compared to the current methodology. Similarly, the net new homes required in both Surrey Heath and Hart would also fall under the new methodology. Whilst it was acknowledged that the current methodology for calculating housing need was in need of reform, it was felt that, given that the Local Plan was at an advanced stage in its preparation and that it plans positively for the delivery of new homes and the regeneration of the town centres, the preparation of the Local Plan should continue. In addition, as the new methodology was at the consultation stage and might change, it was considered appropriate to continue on the basis of the current evidence base. The Council's proposed responses to the consultation were set out in Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Cabinet discussed several elements of the consultation and was keen to ensure that local schools and the Clinical Commissioning Group had full access to this and future consultations.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the Council make representations on the Right Homes in the Right Places consultation, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report No. PLN1733; and
- (ii) the continuation of the preparation of the Rushmoor Local Plan be approved, with submission to the Planning Inspectorate in early 2018.

41. **FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL FUND –**
(Councillor Martin Tennant, Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. COMM1719, which sought approval to award a grant from the Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund, which had been set up to assist local projects.

The Environment and Service Delivery Portfolio Holder had considered the application by the Community Matters Partnership Project for an award of £3,477 towards the cost of returning an overgrown balancing pond to its original state at Balmoral Pond, Balmoral Drive, Frimley and had recommended that this should be approved. It was confirmed that this application met all of the agreed criteria.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that a grant of £3,477 be awarded from the Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund to the Community Matters Partnership Project.

42. **VICTORIA ROAD CHAPEL, FARNBOROUGH –**
(Councillor Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. LEG1715, which set out a request for funding of £44,000 for the construction of a new structural roof and a proposed approach for the future of the Victoria Road Chapel, Farnborough.

Members were reminded that a fire in July 2016 had destroyed the Chapel's roof. It was reported that the sum of £44,000 would be required to replace the roof and carry out minor masonry repairs to return the building to its pre-fire condition. The Cabinet was informed that the Farnborough Society had expressed an interest in attempting to secure the future use of the building as a columbarium, with a predicted cost of £262,725.00. The Council's preferred option was to allow the Farnborough Society time to raise the required sum for the columbarium project but, if this were to prove unfeasible, the Council would pursue an option to de-consecrate the site and convert the Chapel to a domestic dwelling for letting.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) a variation to the Capital Programme of £44,000 to fund the roof restoration at the Victoria Road Chapel, as set out in Report No. LEG1715, be approved;
- (ii) subject to the Farnborough Society indicating a wish to pursue Option 2, as set out in the Report, and being able to both raise the capital funding to convert the Chapel into a columbarium within two years and establish a legal entity to take a lease, the Solicitor to the Council be authorised to agree the terms and conditions of the lease to transfer a leasehold interest in the Chapel; and
- (iii) in the event that the Farnborough Society indicated that it was not in a position to support Option 2, then the Solicitor of the Council be authorised to apply for the de-consecration of the Chapel and to make a bid in the Capital Programme, subject to viability, to convert the Chapel to a residential use for letting.

NOTE: Cr. Barbara Hurst declared a prejudicial interest in this item in respect of her involvement with the Farnborough Society and, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, left the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon.

43. **ADDITIONAL ITEM - SALE OF FORMER HIGHWAY LAND AT NORTH TOWN PHASES 1-4 –**
(Councillor Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. LEG1716, which sought approval to sell former highway land at Vivid's redevelopment in North Town, Aldershot. The Chairman welcomed Cr. K. Dibble, who had requested to address the Cabinet on this issue.

Cr. Dibble explained that the North Town Ward Councillors had been asked to act as go-betweens by prospective residents whose occupation had been delayed by the legal issues that were ongoing. Cr. Dibble requested that the reasons for the issues occurring should be investigated by the Council and that the Cabinet should do everything possible to expedite the process. The Report set out the background to the proposal and the progress to date. Vivid had appointed Savills to undertake a valuation of the former highway land. This value would need to be confirmed by the District Valuer before the transfer to Vivid could go ahead. Members were informed that, in addition to Phases 1 – 4 as set out in the Report, some of the former highway land was situated within Phase 6A. Members were supportive of the approach proposed.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the Solicitor to the Council be authorised to sell the former highways land at North Town Phases 1 – 4 and 6A, shown edged red on the plan at the appendix of Report No. LEG1716, to Vivid on the terms set out in the Report and at a price within a 10% variance of the value determined by the District Valuer.

44. **ADDITIONAL ITEM - COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS –**
(Councillor Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. LEG1717, which sought approval for delegated powers to make timely offers on commercial property acquisitions.

The Report set out the parameters within which it was proposed that bids could be made and it was confirmed that, where this action was taken in future, the matter would be reported to the next Cabinet meeting.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the Solicitor of the Council, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder, the Head of Financial Services and the Chief Executive, be authorised to make offers to acquire commercial properties within the allocated capital budget and with a report following to the subsequent Cabinet meeting, as set out in Report No. LEG1717.

The Meeting closed at 8.01 pm.

D.E. CLIFFORD
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
